

GRADING PERMITS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

IT IS THE INTENT OF SOLEBURY TOWNSHIP TO GUIDE THE RESIDENTS OF SOLEBURY THROUGH, WHAT IS SOMETIMES CONSIDERED A CONFUSING PROCESS, WHEN INFORMED A GRADING PERMIT IS REQUIRED FOR THEIR PROJECT.

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS HAVE BEEN PREPARED BY OUR TOWNSHIP ENGINEER TO HELP SOLEBURY RESIDENTS UNDERSTAND THE GRADING PROCESS AND TERMS THAT MAY NOT BE FAMILIAR TO THEM.

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL THE TOWNSHIP OFFICE AT ANY TIME DURING THE GRADING REVIEW PROCESS WITH QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS.

When is a Grading Permit required? [Refer to enclosed flow chart]:

A Grading Permit is required when your project will result in greater than 2,000 square feet of “earth disturbance”. Earth disturbance should not be confused with the square footage of impervious surface proposed with the project. Earth disturbance is the area of the site that will be disturbed by the proposed activity including but not limited to, clearing and grubbing, grading, excavations, embankments, land development, road maintenance, and the moving, depositing, stockpiling or storing of soil, rock, or earth materials. (Refer Ordinance 2009-004)

What is Stormwater Management?

Stormwater management is the collection and control of stormwater runoff from impervious and non-impervious surfaces of your property. When rain falls, some is absorbed into the ground, the remainder will flow from your property into the nearest stream, channel, creek, swale, storm sewer or other conveyance system. Construction of impervious surfaces increases the rate and volume of runoff from a

property; and degrades water quality. The collection, detention, and slow release of this additional Stormwater runoff (“mitigation”) is “stormwater management”. “Mitigation” of runoff can be accomplished by detention and surface release of excess runoff; or it can be accomplished (preferably) by infiltration of water into the ground.

When is Stormwater Management required?

Generally, stormwater management facilities are required when new impervious surface will exceed 1,000 square feet (proposed or constructed after the approval of a grading permit). Section 104 and 105 of the Stormwater Management Ordinance (Ordinance 2009-003) should be consulted for additional requirements and exempted activities. If an activity is exempt from rate control requirements pursuant to Section 105B, a capital contribution in the amount of \$750.00 per project must be paid to the Solebury Township Natural Resource Protection Fund for the purpose of maintaining or improving storm sewer systems and/or natural watercourses within the Township (Resolution No. 2009-92).

When is Bucks County Conservation District’s (BCCD) approval required?

Your project must be approved by the BCCD when proposed earth disturbance exceeds 1,000 square feet. However, for swimming pool construction, current BCCD policy is to require approval when proposed disturbance will exceed 2,000 square feet. Should you plan to be disturbing earth on your property, BCCD may be contacted at 215-345-5777 (<http://www.buckscdd.org/>).

How long will the process take?:

Your application and plan will be submitted to the Township Engineer’ Office within 24 hours of receiving it at the Township Building. All submissions related to grading must first be submitted the Township, and *may not be sent directly from the applicant to the Township Engineer.*

The Township Engineer will review your plan and return comments to the Township generally within 10 days of receipt by their office. The Township will then notify the applicant, in writing, of plan approval or rejection, noting all applicable nonconformities with Ordinance 2009-003 (Stormwater Management), and Ordinance 2009-004 (Grading). If additional information or resubmission is required, review time by the Township Engineer decreases with subsequent reviews.

Who can I contact with questions?

Prior to beginning any project in Solebury Township, we recommend our residents visit the township office to meet with the Township Zoning Official. It is suggested you call the office at (215) 297-5656 to arrange for an appointment, but walk-ins are welcome.

As a result of that meeting, arrangements may be made for a consultation with the Township Engineer. Please refer to the Resident Consultation Form included with this package for further information.

What is the definition of Impervious?

Impervious surfaces are those surfaces which do not absorb precipitation and surface water. All buildings, parking areas, driveways, roads, sidewalks, swimming pools, and any areas containing concrete, asphalt, and packed stone, compacted soils, or other equivalent surfaces (not designed as a BMP), shall be considered impervious within this definition. Other areas determined by the Township Engineer to be impervious within the meaning of this definition will also be classified as impervious surfaces.

What is meant by Earth Disturbance?

A construction or other human activity which disturbs and destabilizes the surface of the land including, but not limited to, clearing and grubbing, grading, excavations, embankments, land development, road maintenance, and the moving, depositing, stockpiling or storing of soil, rock or earth materials.

What are the restrictions to Patio Pavers?

Patio pavers may be considered an impervious surface dependent on their design and construction. Applicant should refer to manufacturers design and installation specifications and Appendix I of the Stormwater Management Ordinance.

What are the restrictions for a Pole Barn?:

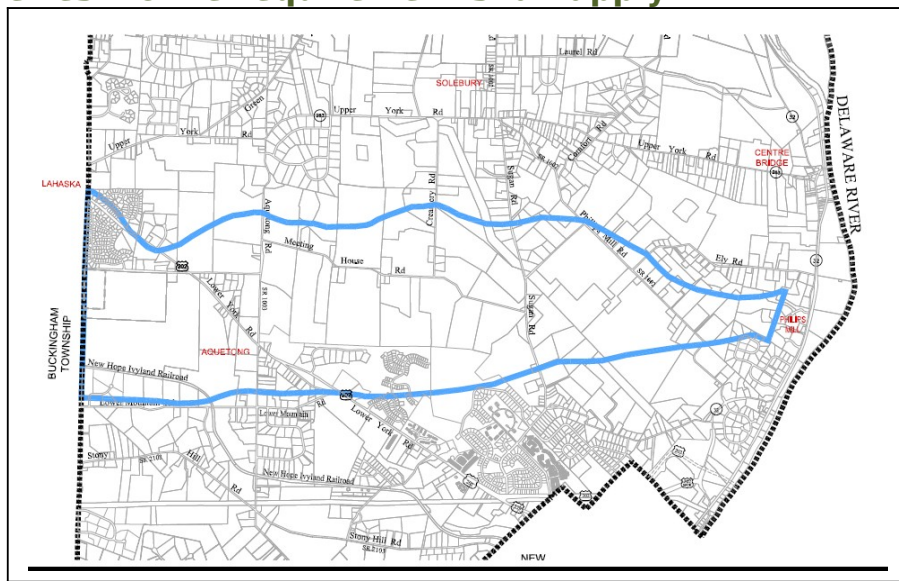
Although Pole Barns can be quite large, their construction does not always involve ground disturbance in excess of 2,000 square feet due to the unique method of construction. However, even if total ground disturbance is to be less than 2,000 square feet, if the total roof area (impervious surface) of the pole barn is 1,000 square feet or greater, stormwater management facilities will be required. The project may be subject to Ordinance 2009-003, Section 105.B, Stormwater Peak Rate Control Exemption depending upon the lot area.

What is the definition of the Carbonate Geology District?

In accordance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Township Ordinances regulate and restrict uses in areas of hazardous geological formations. This area in Solebury Township is located within a defined boundary titled the “Carbonate Geology District.” Carbonate geology consists of rock formations made up of carbonate minerals, including limestone and dolomite. The landscape within this boundary is shaped by the dissolution (dissolving by groundwater) of the layers of limestone and dolomite which results in distinctive surface features (karst features) with sinkholes being the most common. However, karst surface features may be completely absent where the limestone and dolomite is superimposed by other non-soluble rock layers.

Those areas of Solebury Township within limestone and dolomite formations are identified in the Solebury Township Zoning Map. The Carbonate Geology District includes all area within the boundary shown on the Zoning Map as well as all area within 200 feet of the outer perimeter of the boundary.

All development and construction activity within the “Carbonate Geology Boundary” is regulated by Article 15 of the Zoning Ordinance (Natural Resources Ordinance) and Section 5.25 of the Subdivision Ordinance (including activities proposed in conjunction with a grading or stormwater permit application). It is also important to note, pursuant to Section 1504.F.2.b (Article 15) of the Zoning Ordinance, total Impervious surface on a parcel shall be limited to not more than 10 percent of the lot area, except that in districts where a more restrictive impervious surface ratio is in effect, the more restrictive requirement shall apply.



CARBONATE GEOLOGY BOUNDARY

What is the definition of an NPDES Permit and when is it required?

Water pollution degrades surface waters making them unsafe for drinking, fishing, swimming, and other activities. As authorized by the Federal Clean Water Act, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program controls water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants (including erosion and earth disturbance) into waters of the United States. A NPDES Permit is required when proposed ground disturbance is equal to or greater than 1.00 acres (43,560 square feet). In Solebury Township, review and issuance of NPDES Permits is administered by the Bucks County Conservation District. However, all disturbance of 1.00 acres or greater that is to occur within a watershed classified by the State of Pennsylvania as “High Quality” or “Exceptional Value” requires an “Individual NPDES Permit” administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. Watershed classification may be determined by referencing the Pennsylvania Code, Chapter 93.

<http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/025/chapter93/chap93toc.html>).

What is the Natural Resources Ordinance and related protection requirements (Article 15)?

Article 15 of the Zoning Ordinance identifies all Natural Resources (such as lakes, ponds, wetlands, steep slopes, and high quality soils) in Solebury Township that must be protected during construction/development activity. Some of these resources are acceptable for limited disturbance/encroachment; however, others may not be disturbed or encroached upon at all and have additional setback requirement to ensure their protection and preservation. All grading and stormwater management plans must include a table of Natural Resources (as defined by Article 15) including area (square feet or acres) of each type of resource, permitted area of disturbance, and proposed area of disturbance.

What is meant by specimen trees or vegetation?

Specimen vegetation is a tree (or trees) or other vegetation determined to be of high quality (“specimen” quality) as determined by a natural resource professional such as, but not limited to a certified landscape architect or arborist or which fall within the parameters of the list of trees identified under Section 1504.C.1.c (Article 15) of the Zoning Ordinance. The specimen trees identified under this section are intended to provide general guidelines and examples of what constitutes a

specimen tree. The list is not considered all inclusive. Specimen vegetation must be protected in accordance with the regulations of Article 15 of the Zoning Ordinance.

SPECIMEN TREE(S) AND VEGETATION

Specimen tree(s) and vegetation - A tree or trees or other vegetation determined to be of "high quality" ("specimen" quality) as determined by a natural resource professional such as, but not limited to a certified landscape architect or arborist.

Examples of specimen trees are identified below. This list is intended to provide general guidelines and examples of what constitutes a specimen tree. The list is not considered all inclusive.

SPECIES (Common Name)	MINIMUM SIZE (caliper)
Apple	24 inches
Locust	30 inches
Sassafras	20 inches
Ash	32 inches
Maple	32 inches
Spruce	30 inches
Beech	32 inches
Sycamore	36 inches
Cherry	24 inches
Oak	32 inches
Elm	30 inches
Walnut	30 inches
Hemlock	30 inches
Pine	30 inches
Hickory	30 inches